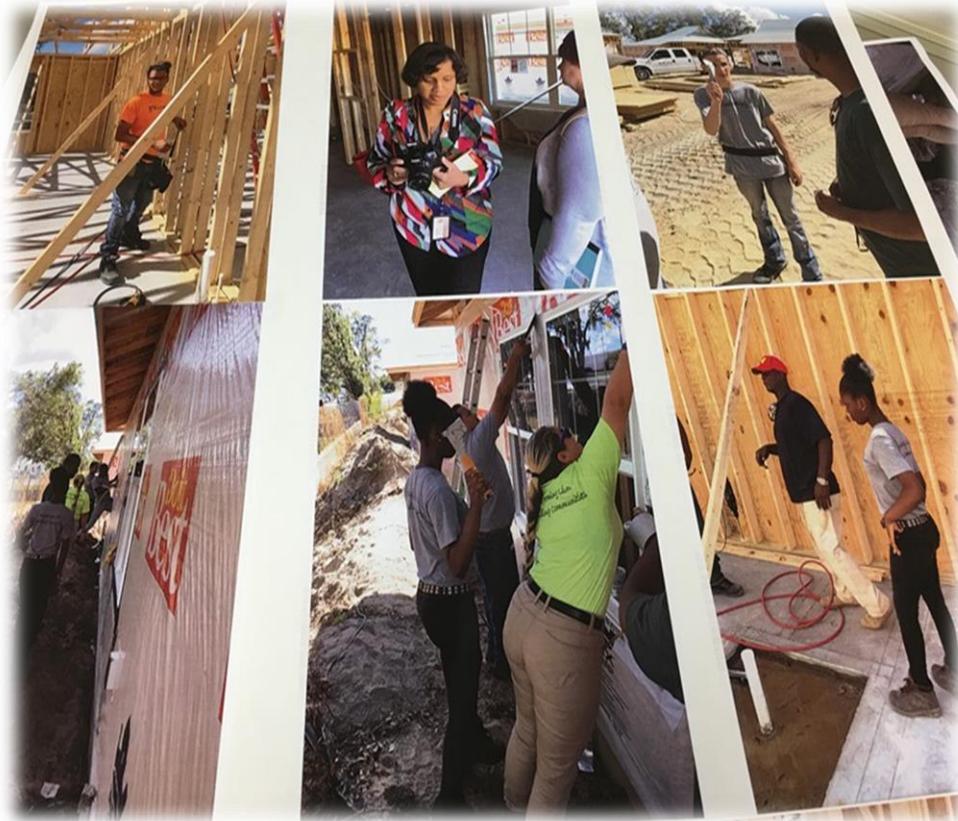


# The Achiever

Volume 1 – No. 1

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Valerie Turner, Vice President of The Lakeland Housing Authority (pictured top center) visits the Williamstown site as participants of YouthBuild-Lakeland diligently work to get the job done.

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# Lakeland Housing Authority Offers On-the-Job Training for YouthBuild-Lakeland



YouthBuild-Lakeland's Cycle 15 participants are enthusiastic and excited about having the Lakeland Housing Authority's Williamstown development project as their construction classroom. Years from now, these participants will be able to share with their children and grandchildren about their contribution to the erecting of this community. Terry Love, YouthBuild Construction Trainer appreciates the interest and desire to learn that the young adults, ages 16-24, are displaying. "The participants put great effort into performing as they are trained on the construction site", shared Love, "and they work well together as a team".

The program provides each YouthBuild participant with a tool-belt with tools, safety boots, work shirts and personal protective equipment (PPE), along with the opportunity to receive on-the-job training. The treasure chest of construction skills learned will be of great benefit, once they graduate from YouthBuild and begin to seek gainful employment.





# Earn While You Learn!

*Obtain your GED*

*Earn \$\$\$ every month*

*Focus on your Career Development*

*Receive Training in the Construction and Healthcare*



## Who can Apply?

Men and Women 16 to 24 years of age who live in Polk County and do NOT have a GED or High School diploma

*Now accepting applications for Spring 2018.*

**YouthBuild Lakeland is funded by a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration and is an Equal Opportunity Employer**

Return applications to:

The YouthBuild Center, 1500 N. New York Avenue,  
Lakeland, Florida 33805

or apply ON-LINE at:

[www.lakelandhousing.org](http://www.lakelandhousing.org)

Select Shortcuts then YouthBuild-Lakeland,  
then scroll down to select application.



# Staff Spotlight

Rick Mooneyham has been with the Lakeland Housing Authority for 5-1/2 years as the GED Educator and now, Program Coordinator. Previously, he had been a public, private, and alternative school teacher for 12 years. Rick has a Bachelor's Degree in English Education from the University of North Florida and extensive graduate work from the University of South Florida in Reading Education. His educational expertise is in motivating students who have not been previously successful. He has been highly successful with the YouthBuild Program, averaging over a 90% graduation rate. He brings a strong love for students and the program to his new role as Program Coordinator. Rick is married with two children.



**RICK MOONEYHAM**

A graphic titled "Student Spotlight" featuring two spotlights on the left and right sides, casting light on two student portraits. The title "Student Spotlight" is written in a large, white, serif font at the top center. Below the title are two side-by-side portraits of students. The student on the left is a young woman with dark hair, wearing a blue polo shirt with a logo. The student on the right is a young man with short dark hair, wearing a red polo shirt with a logo. Below each portrait is a caption and a short paragraph of text.

## Student Spotlight

**Cassidy Hernandez**

A participant of YouthBuild-Lakeland's Cycle 15, Cassidy aspires to become an Architect. Her plans are to begin post-secondary education at Polk State College-Lakeland campus in 2018.

**D'Andre Morgan**

A participant of YouthBuild-Lakeland's Cycle 15, D'Andre aspires to become a Sports Medicine Physician. His plans are to begin post-secondary education at Polk State College-Lakeland campus in 2018.

# From Prison Cell to Office of the President



**JOHN VALVERDE**  
Chief Executive Officer  
YouthBuild USA, Inc.

John Valverde is the Chief Executive Officer of YouthBuild USA, Inc. At the age of 21, he was incarcerated for murder. At the age of 21, John was convicted of manslaughter and spent 16 years in prison before being released on parole. During his incarceration, John did not become bitter, he became better. He accepted responsibility for his actions and made a decision to transform his life. While in prison, he earned a Bachelor of Science in Behavioral Science from Mercy College; then went on to earn a Master of Professional Studies in Urban Ministry from the New York Theological Seminary. John is an advocate for creating opportunities and removing barriers for persons of low-income and the formerly incarcerated. In July 2017, John served as the keynote speaker at YouthBuild-Lakeland's 10<sup>th</sup> Year Reunion and Celebration.

In 2016, the following letter was written by Dorothy Stoneman, Founder of YouthBuild USA:

***Dear Friend of YouthBuild:***

*We have reached that special moment!*

*After a thorough national search over ten months, the Board of Directors of YouthBuild USA, Inc. has chosen our new CEO, the person who will lead the YouthBuild movement into its next chapter in collaboration with our senior managers, staff, board, local affiliates, graduates, and many partners.*

*The Board unanimously selected John B. Valverde, the current executive vice president of the Osborne Association, a highly regarded organization that has led the development of transformational programming and re-entry for people incarcerated in New York State.*

*At the Osborne Association, John leads and manages a staff of 115, a budget of \$25M from more than 50 funders including many local, state, and federal public sources; he has direct responsibility for over 27 complex local programs within which he has launched many effective new initiatives. Recently he has been working with a team leading a successful \$20 million fundraising campaign for transforming a prison into a re-entry center in the Bronx. His references highlight his skill as a collaborative manager and leader who is kind, clear, inspiring, and effective.*

*In addition, as a Latino man who has experienced incarceration, healing, and personal transformation on a profound level, he brings a natural connection to our constituency as well as a deep knowledge of and commitment to the core values and philosophy of YouthBuild. John's own experience has created a deep belief in the power of love coupled*

*with comprehensive opportunities within a caring community. These have been the core elements of YouthBuild's success.*

*Having obtained his Master's degree in urban ministry from the NY Theological Seminary, and having co-founded Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison, Inc., he understands the power of education as an essential element of personal development. As the past leader of workforce and career development at Osborne, John understands the importance of effective job training. As the past Director of the Green Career Center at Osborne, John embraces green building and environmental justice, principles that have been built into YouthBuild's construction training. John is a passionate advocate on the issues of mass incarceration and racial injustice. He is also committed to the generation of ethical young leaders who will emerge to influence public policy.*

*I am delighted that we are at this stage. As you can imagine, there has been considerable suspense! Now we enter the next phase of transition. John will begin as CEO on January 3, 2017. Between now and then, he will get to know our senior managers and Board members in greater depth and participate in various forms of planning. He will also complete a demanding transition process of his own as the out-going EVP at the Osborne Association. I will remain CEO until John arrives.*

*At this important moment in the life of YouthBuild, I'd also like to share a little bit about our Board of Directors. Its members collectively have over 150 years of experience with YouthBuild. They include two co-creators of YouthBuild: our board chair, Roy Priest, established and ran the YouthBuild program within HUD for several years when it first started as an authorized federal program in the nineties; and Cliff Johnson, chair of our advocacy committee, introduced YouthBuild to its champions on Capitol Hill in 1990 and guided us through the authorization process when he worked at the Children's Defense Fund.*

*The board also includes experts in financial management, community organizers, non-profit and social justice leaders, researchers, business and philanthropic leaders, four YouthBuild graduates, and two former YouthBuild USA senior managers. Their commitment to and wisdom about YouthBuild has been a source of great strength for me over the decades, as it will be for John.*

*I remain committed to the vision and philosophy of YouthBuild. I look forward to witnessing its increased impact over the next decades. Nonetheless, I am relieved and happy that John Valverde will be arriving to manage and lead this large organization as I turn 75. He will be supported by our highly effective senior management team, staff, and board.*

*I will serve as an advisor at John's request and along with several of our staff and with John's support I will continue to guide the development of Opportunity Youth United, the movement of young leaders that we have been fostering in partnership with 15 other national organizations over the past four years.*

*I am deeply grateful to all who have helped me bring YouthBuild to this stage, and to all of you who will continue to be partners to John and YouthBuild USA, Inc. in the future.*

*With profound gratitude, I thank you!*



*Dorothy Stoneman*

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The Achiever is published by the Lakeland Housing Authority and YouthBuild Lakeland.  
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**EARL W. HAYNES**  
**Program Manager**  
**YouthBuild-Lakeland**

*In the Spring of 2004, Alonzo Thompson, Crime Prevention Coordinator for the City of Lakeland and I met to discuss the possibility of us jointly applying for the YouthBuild grant. At that time, the program was under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In 2005, we submitted the application, but failed to other cities that were awarded the grant. I was determined to continue to pursue the YouthBuild grant. As a result, in 2006, HUD awarded the Lakeland Housing Authority a YouthBuild grant in the amount of \$850,000. My effort and determination were spurred by the realization that residents of public housing, those who live in predominantly low-income zip codes who are increasingly impoverished and welfare-dependent, and the formerly incarcerated, needed innovative and aggressive strategies to help them become economically self-sufficient. YouthBuild would offer them education, encouragement, enlightenment, and hope.*

*Over the past eleven years, YouthBuild-Lakeland has been very successful. We have afforded our program participants access to job training in the field of nursing, hands-on building construction training, career development, job placement, and post-secondary education.*

*We are deeply indebted to our community partners, other organizations and/or businesses, our FPO, TA and individuals who have helped to sustain our program. Above all, we would like to thank the current and past administration for their endless support.*

*You are always welcome to come join us and share the hopes and dreams for the improvement of the lives of our YouthBuild-Lakeland participants and the communities in which they live.*



*The Lakeland Housing Authority and  
YouthBuild-Lakeland extend greetings  
to you and your family for a  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!*

